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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Bureau of Agricultural Economics

The Farm Labor Situation in Texas

by

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Division of Farm Population and Rural Welfare

Presented before the Senate Committee
on Education and Labor

Washington, D. C.

May 1940

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Within recent years the farm labor problem in Texas has been greatly intensified by the rapid increase of the migratory labor population. The rapid increase of a population with inadequate income has created grave social problems, especially those of health, sanitation and housing, in areas where labor concentrates. The farm population in some areas is virtually doubled during peak season of farm operations.

Thousands of seasonal wage workers, many of them with families, roam the State regularly, following crops and seasons in search of employment. The number varies inversely with crop conditions and opportunity for other work. There is every prospect that the number of migrants in Texas will increase because of: (1) the growing surplus of farm population without an adequate urban outlet, (2) the unstable tenure system, (3) soil erosion and exhaustion, (4) rapid technological improvements in labor saving machinery for agriculture and the rapid trend in the direction of large-scale, commercial farming.

Persons Gainfully Employed in Agriculture

Census figures at the beginning of the century reported that 62.4 percent of the persons gainfully employed were engaged in agricultural pursuits, compared to 38.1 percent in 1930 and an estimated 30 percent in 1940. ^{1/} This indicates that as time progresses considerably less labor will be utilized in agriculture. Of the 842,001 individuals (Table 1) reported gainfully employed in Texas agriculture for 1930, 198,760 or 23.6 percent were classified as wage workers. A high percentage of these wage workers are employed seasonally and cannot therefore depend solely on agricultural earnings for a living, but must invade other fields to supplement their earnings. Likewise, many workers shown by the census as employed in industry do not work exclusively in that field. In other words, there is a continuous exchange of workers between industry and agriculture. This is substantiated by the fact that in 1930, over one-third of the wage workers lived in urban and rural-nonfarm areas. No reliable figures are available as to the exact number of workers who are in and out of Texas agriculture, but the best estimate available, which varies from year to year, is that between 250,000 and 300,000 workers are at present utilized.

Trend in Farms and Farm Acreage

In Table 2 a percentage increase since 1930 is shown in the number of farms and in farm acreage, for the State and by specific size groups, with the exception of those between 20-99 acres. The trend in the direction of relatively large-scale farming is indicated by the fact that farms of 175 acres and over represented 19.9 percent of all farms and occupied 78.1 percent of all farm acreage in 1930, as compared to 22.1 and 80.4 percent respectively in 1935. A recent study (unpublished) of 491 farms, located in different types of farming ^{2/} areas surveyed, indicates a trend in the direction of larger farm units.

^{1/} Bureau of Business Research, University of Texas.

^{2/} Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, FSA and WPA cooperating. Study of Farm Labor Changes, 1934-38.

My dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. in relation to the matter of the
and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.
I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. H. [Name]

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

On the 14th inst. [Name] was interviewed by the undersigned in relation to the matter of the
and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.
I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. H. [Name]

Very respectfully,
J. H. [Name]

Table 1.- Number and percentage of gainfully employed agricultural workers living in urban, rural-nonfarm areas, and on farms, 1930

Item	United States and Texas, 1930			
	Number	:Percentage	Number	:Percentage
All agricultural workers				
living	10,482,323	100.0	842,001	100.0
In urban areas	446,865	4.3	38,166	4.5
In rural nonfarm areas	894,096	8.5	63,301	7.5
On farms in rural areas	9,141,362	87.2	740,534	88.0
Farm owners and tenants				
living	6,017,722	100.0	488,697	100.0
In urban areas	123,681	2.1	9,949	2.0
In rural-nonfarm areas	172,038	2.8	15,626	3.2
On farms in rural areas	5,722,003	95.1	463,122	94.8
Farm wage workers				
living	2,727,035	100.0	198,760	100.0
In urban areas	298,498	10.9	26,478	13.3
In rural-nonfarm areas	676,490	24.8	44,015	22.2
On farms in rural areas	1,752,047	64.3	128,267	64.5

Source: U. S. Census, 1930.

Population Volume III, Part I, Table 30, page 22, and Volume III, Part II, page 949.

Table 2.- Changes in number of farms and farm acreage in Texas by size of farm groups, 1930 and 1935

Item	Size of farm (acres)									
	:Under:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:260-	:500-	:1,000
	:Total: 10	:10-19:	:20-49:	:50-99:	:100-174:	:175-259:	:499	:999	:	and
	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	over
Percentage increase or decrease in										
Number of farms	1.1	60.0	22.6	-14.0	-6.5	1.9	6.7	13.5	21.4	16.6
Farm acreage	10.4	67.0	19.2	-10.5	0	.7	7.0	18.2	21.8	13.0

Source: 1935 Census of Agriculture, Vol. II.

Mechanization

As shown in Table 3 rapid mechanization is reflected in the decline in the number of workstock and the increase in the number of tractors, particularly since 1930. 3/ The general all-purpose tractor has characterized and dominated recent agricultural mechanization.

The rapid shift to larger power and equipment units, especially in the High and Low Plains, the Corpus Christi Area, the Coast Prairie and the Black Prairie means a smaller resident farm population and the use of relatively large amounts of seasonal labor. These changes are resulting in the need for fewer farm operators and less regular hired labor. While it is not possible at this time to determine definitely the full extent of the consequences arising out of these changes in the use of power and equipment, we cannot escape the implication that far-reaching social and economic changes must necessarily follow. It remains to be seen whether we shall be able to reshape our economic and social institutions to permit society to take full advantage of increased efficiency on individual farms and at the same time cushion the impact of these changes on an important group in our population. 4/

3/ Ibid.

4/ "Some Technological Changes in the High Plains Cotton Area of Texas," C. A. Bonnen and A. C. McGee, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, A. & M. College of Texas. Journal of Farm Economics, Vol. XX, No. 3, August 1938.

Table 3 .- Trend in number of workstock and tractors on Texas farms, 1920 and 1938

Year	Number of workstock (Thousands)	Number of workstock <i>TRACTORS</i> (Thousands)
1938	1,454	99
1937	1,494	98
1936	1,530	74
1935	1,576	<u>1</u> /
1930	1,835	37
1925	2,220	17
1920	2,300	9

1/ No data.

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture, Vol. III, 1935, 243 for data 1920 to 1935. Data on workstock, 1936 to 1938, from Division of Crop and Livestock Estimates. Data on tractors from the Farm Implement News, April 1936, 1937, 1938.

Seasonal Labor and Routes of Migrations

The nature and extent of Texas agriculture creates an unstable labor demand which encourages continuous migration for many thousands of workers and their families in an effort to piece together a series of short employments as a means of subsistence.

By and large, the migratory labor movement in Texas is intra-State. There is, however, a slight infiltration of workers from neighboring States into the northern, central and High Plains areas during peak cotton harvest seasons and into north Texas during the peak onion harvest season.

Very little information is available on the inter-State migration of Texas workers. There are three known migrations from the State:

1. A migration annually of an estimated 3,000 Mexican laborers from around Crystal City into the beet fields of Michigan and Minnesota.
2. A spasmodic migration of an unknown number of cotton pickers into the Mississippi Delta Area.
3. A periodic migration westward of an unknown number of workers.

Investigation has revealed that approximately 85 percent of the migratory workers within the borders of Texas are of Mexican descent. 5/ The majority of these workers claim residence in the South Texas Plains and Southern Prairies crop reporting districts. Of the remaining 15 percent, 10 percent are whites living in scattered areas over the State and 5 percent Negroes who reside chiefly in East Texas, the Northern Plains, and in river valley areas from central Texas to the Gulf.

Cotton is Texas' major crop in all respects. Acreage in cultivation July 1 and production in 500 pound (lint) gross weight bales is shown in Table 6 by crop reporting districts. Cotton production provides employment to the greatest number of workers over a longer period of time than any other enterprise in the State because of the staggered dates of planting, cultivating and harvesting from the south Texas Plains to the Southern High Plains. Under the present method of production the maximum labor demand is made for harvesting. Thus the heavy demand for labor, and the prospects of following the crop from July through December, encourages migration of workers.

The extent of the annual migration of cotton harvest labor shown by the map, "Principal Migratory Labor Routes," follows very closely the areas of greatest production shown by the map, "Cotton Production by Counties in Crop Reporting Areas, 1939."

5/ Survey of Farm Placement in Texas, 1936-37. Texas State Employment Service affiliated with U. S. Employment Service.



TEXAS

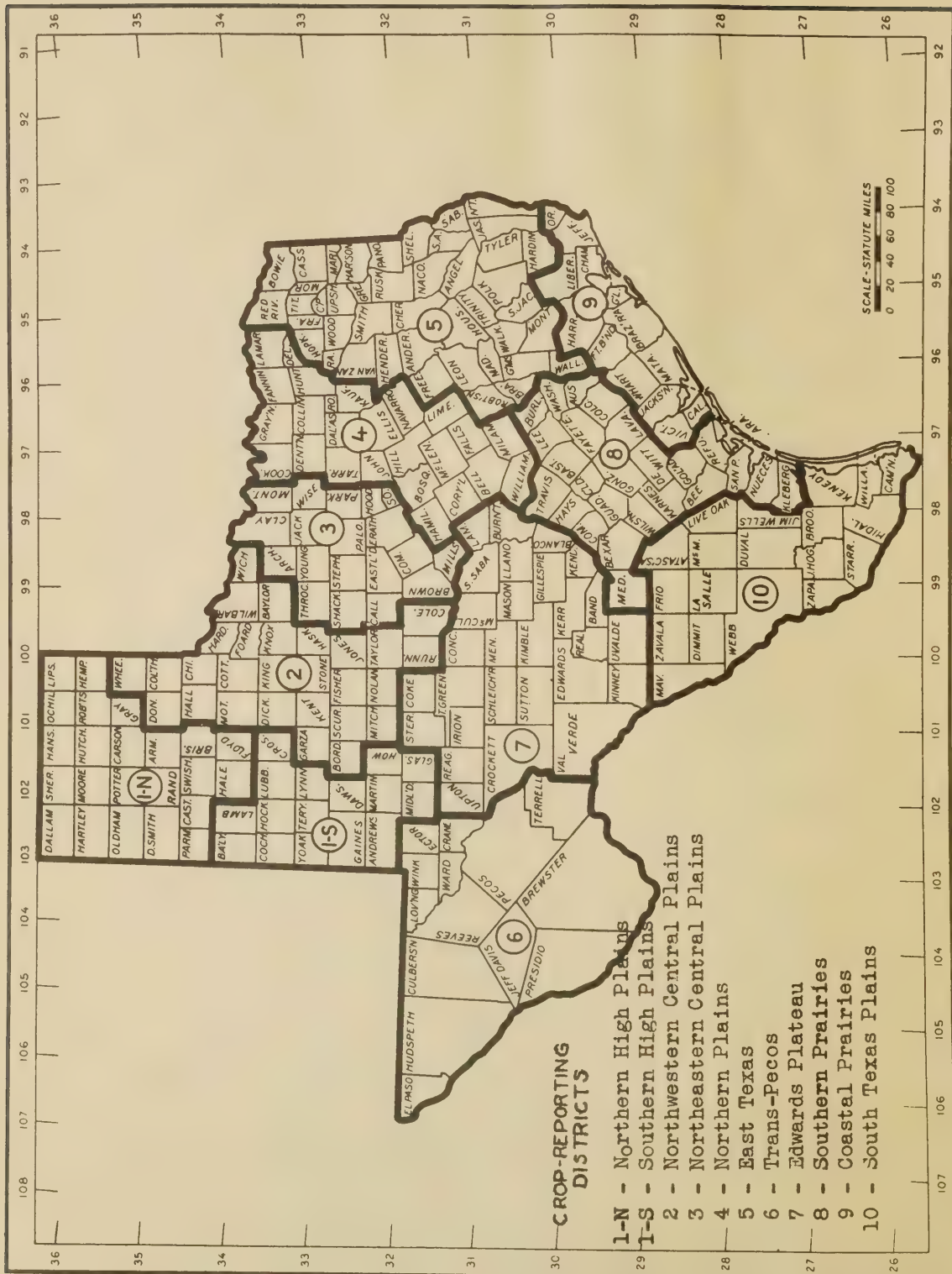


Table 6 .- Texas cotton

Area:	Acreage in cultivation, July 1 ^{1/}									
	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Thou- sands
State	17,314	16,484	15,060	14,447	13,881	11,989	11,173	11,973	11,695	10,025
1-N	227	233	230	269	296	243	216	247	253	221
1-S	1,338	1,301	1,293	1,309	1,189	976	1,023	1,332	1,479	1,274
2	3,216	3,063	2,807	2,786	2,700	2,267	2,073	2,204	2,121	1,811
3	687	631	541	518	555	519	470	458	392	294
4	4,621	4,414	4,099	3,910	3,684	3,145	2,926	3,137	3,046	2,618
5	3,136	2,937	2,530	2,313	2,223	1,924	1,736	1,791	1,715	1,480
6	98	93	80	67	64	58	56	69	78	70
7	504	445	375	371	388	345	321	335	309	246
8	2,255	2,165	2,027	1,919	1,839	1,643	1,514	1,514	1,426	1,240
9	518	534	539	535	499	427	399	415	397	340
10	714	668	549	450	444	442	439	471	479	431

Lint production ^{1/}
(Thousands of 500-lb. gross weight bales)

State	4,256	4,334	4,794	4,687	3,939	3,046	2,812	3,494	4,082	3,539
1-N	58	54	67	79	69	43	38	62	82	70
1-S	269	318	429	459	321	200	252	482	644	498
2	602	559	789	1,014	823	508	460	557	643	544
3	111	101	126	143	127	99	92	85	68	47
4	1,296	1,302	1,407	1,289	1,079	872	817	1,017	1,126	980
5	773	732	760	678	556	477	457	527	593	545
6	62	61	55	46	48	50	51	66	79	71
7	99	88	107	110	81	64	73	84	77	51
8	637	716	667	564	551	473	360	368	453	432
9	168	230	255	200	171	144	109	124	162	150
10	181	173	132	105	113	116	103	122	155	151

^{1/} Two-year moving average.

Source: U. S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service.

The cotton harvest season begins in Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties usually about July 1 reaching peak labor demands around July 15.

From the above counties, two movements of laborers begin around July 15 or shortly thereafter as cotton becomes scattered and the season is opening in - (1) Nueces and San Patricio Counties, where large amounts of labor is used in harvesting cotton produced by large-scale farming methods, (2) Wharton and Fort Bend Counties in the Coastal Prairies where labor demands for the harvesting operation is always great. Also during this same period rice harvest operations require fairly large amounts of migrant labor:

"One large farm in Nueces County reported 5,000 migrant cotton pickers working at one time during the 1937 season."

Laborer movements out of Nueces and San Patricio Counties shortly after August 15 may follow two routes into San Antonio, thence up into central Texas or take a direct route to west Texas through the grazing area.

Migratory laborers moving out of Fort Bend and Wharton Counties may take the eastern route up the Trinity River valley into central and north Texas, or follow the Brazos river valley into central Texas, thence into the northern plains. This is also the terminal for migrants leaving the State, who follow the cotton harvest into Delta areas of the Mississippi river.

Data are not available regarding extent and scope of inter-state migrations, in and out of the northern, central and High Plains Cotton Areas.

Migrant movements west from the Northern Plains usually start from Fort Worth. From this terminal they have the choice of following the Red River Valley, thence along the west border of the Central Plains as far north as Wheeler County or may move from points along this route into the interior sections of the Central Plains and thence into the High Plains Cotton Area. The other is a direct route into the Central and High Plains Areas where large-scale farming demands large numbers of migratory workers for harvesting.

The High Plains Cotton Area is the terminus of the Texas cotton harvest. Harvest operations usually end the latter part of November or in early December. Those workers ending their harvest work here usually return to the Lower Rio Grande Valley in search of employment in the citrus fruit crop which begins in December and ends in April, or the vegetable crop which begins in January and ends in June.

The spinach and vegetable crop harvest during January, February and March in the Winter Garden Area is handled locally by resident labor who are considered migrants from 7 to 10 months a year.

The onion harvest demands large amounts of labor and competes with vegetables in the Lower Rio Grande Valley during April and May for labor. Other areas requiring substantial amounts of labor for the harvesting of onions are the Corpus Christi area during May and the north Texas area in June.

This completes the labor cycle of the Texas migratory worker, and usually from the onion harvest he goes into the cotton harvest.

SCHEDULE 1

MAJOR MIGRATORY LABOR ROUTES



Prepared by: Farm Placement Service,
Austin, Texas

COTTON PRODUCTION BY COUNTIES IN CROP REPORTING AREAS, 1939

(500 POUND GROSS WEIGHT BALES)

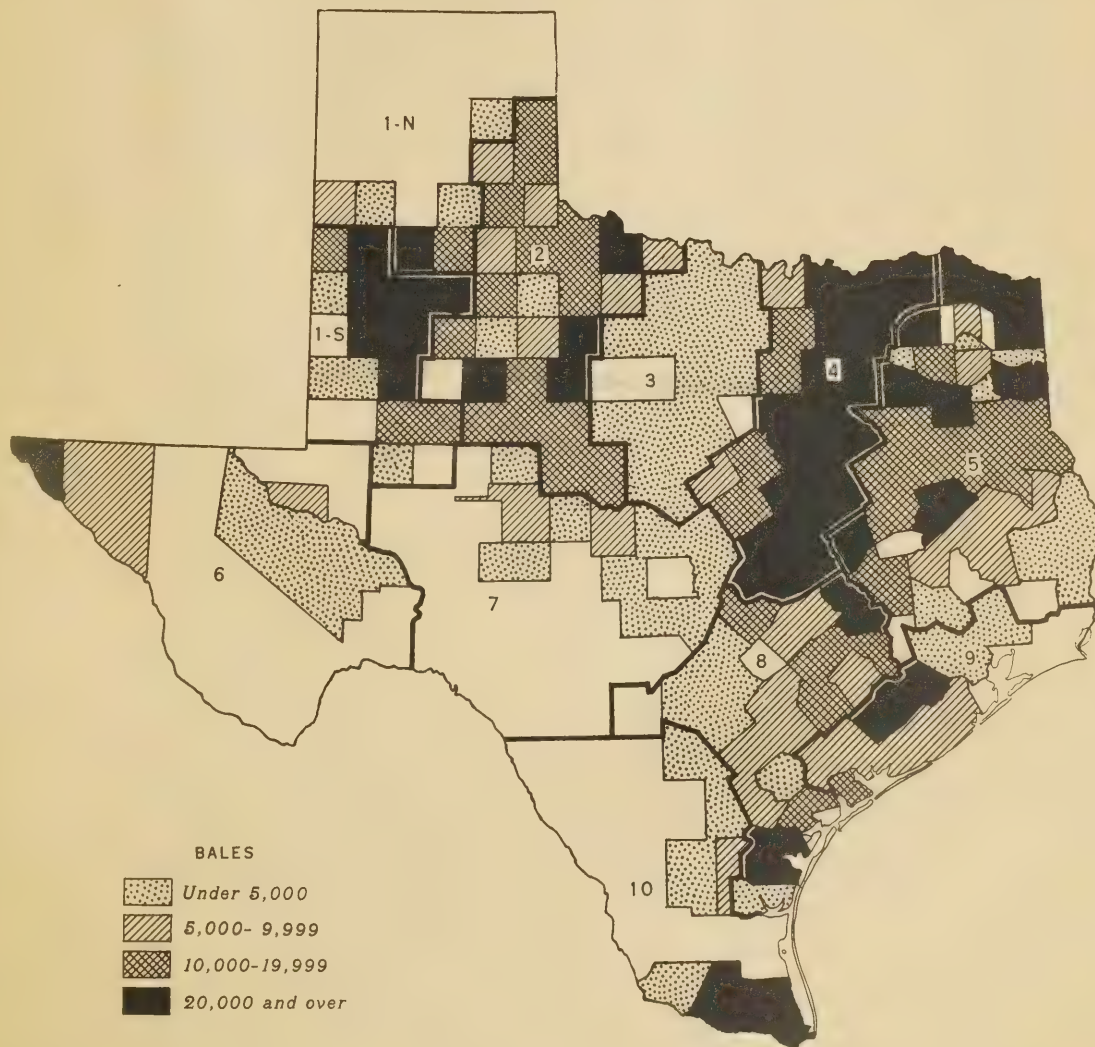


Table 7 .- Approximate chronological harvest dates and estimated percentage of cotton picked by type of labor in crop reporting areas, 1938

Area	Approximate harvest dates:		Percentage of cotton picked by		
	Begins	Ends	Family labor	Seasonal hired labor	
				Local	Migrant
State	July 1	December 31	19	27	54
1	September 1	December 31	1	8	91
2	September 1	December 31	6	40	54
6	September 1	December 20	5	65	30
3	August 20	December 15	15	35	50
4	August 1	December 15	15	27	58
5	July 20	December 15	83	17	0
7	August 1	December 20	5	25	70
9	July 20	November 1	5	30	65
8	July 20	November 15	5	30	65
10	July 1	November 1	1	45	54

Transportation

Already there has developed a widespread private and unregulated system of transporting migratory labor - a system which has in it great possibilities of labor exploitation. The labor contractor, usually a Mexican with an open truck, recruits a group of laborers, usually from 20 to 40 in number, and transports them, presumably free of charge, from area to area across the State as the cotton picking and the truck and fruit harvesting seasons progress. The labor contractor is usually the contact man and business agent for the laborers. He takes the responsibility for contacting farmers, for weighing and hauling cotton (or truck crops), and collecting the laborers' earnings from the farmer. For these services and for transporting the laborers, the contractor receives from the laborer from five to ten cents for each hundred pounds of cotton picked and from the farmer about \$1.50 per bale. 6/

It was reported that one large cotton operator in west Texas preferred Negro labor for cotton picking and hired a number of truck owners to recruit Negroes from central Texas, paying approximately \$5.00 per person, and deducting the amount from the first money made by the pickers.

"Contractors are almost invariably truck owners transporting the workers to areas where they have heard of labor shortage. An excellent idea of just how a representative "contractor" operates can be gained from an excerpt from a report made early in 1936:

"In addition to transporting labor, they are hired to weigh the cotton, take charge of the commissaries, and oversee the work generally. They are responsible for any loss of sacks or groceries---the groceries being advanced to the worker, paid for out of wages when earned. If any of the workers get an allotment of groceries, then decide to leave, the contractor is required to pay for them. This past season, as I understand it, Messrs. M. paid \$1.50 per adult for transportation of labor to their farms; \$1.00 per bale for overseeing of work, and extra pay for weighing of cotton. For cotton chopping, I believe the pay was \$1.50 per day for managing the crews and extra pay for transporting of labor.

"The customary price the contractor receives for vegetable harvesting is five cents per bushel, or its equivalent, or he is paid on a commission basis. The farmers sell their crops to large companies or buyers from the east and they employ their contractors for the gathering of the various crops. For this reason, contractors are employed more for vegetable harvesting than for cotton....." 7/

6/ "The Social Effects of Recent Trends in the Mechanization of Agriculture," C. Horace Hamilton, a paper read before the joint session of the American Farm Economic Association and Rural Sociological Society, Detroit, 1938.

7/ "Survey of Farm Placements in Texas," 1936-1937, Texas State Employment Service, affiliated with the U. S. Employment Service.

In a recent study (unpublished) of agricultural laborers in Texas, 20.2 percent reported they furnished their own transportation (car or truck) to and from jobs; 3.2 percent reported travel by bus or rail while 59.4 percent reported transportation furnished by a labor contractor, who in many cases was a relative. Of the remaining 17.2 percent, the majority reported that the farm operator provided transportation, to and from their present job, while some reported that they had "hitch-hiked". The average miles traveled by these migratory workers to their present jobs or to the camp (where they were interviewed) ranged from 135 to 480 miles.

Housing, Sanitation and Health

The housing of migrants in Texas has always been and still remains a serious social problem. The streams of migrants moving annually from one part of the State to another, following crop harvesting seasons, are usually thrown upon their own resources for living accommodations, and it is not uncommon to see truck after truck parked along the highways at dusk with their occupants cooking by a campfire and preparing to sleep in the open on the roadside or in the nearby fields. Such conditions become even more deplorable and unsanitary when large groups move into a small town, doubling the population over night. It is not difficult to imagine the serious problems which the harvest season brings to the local residents. There is always the possibility of rains, inclement weather, and other factors, to complicate conditions further and when such occur, disease and sickness 8/ become a threat not only to the migrants but to the local population as well.

Another complicating problem is the fact that a high percentage of the migrants are of Mexican descent and have a low standard of living.

Within recent years some improvements in housing, sanitation and health conditions have been provided the migratory worker at labor concentration points. The Farm Security Administration has completed four farm laborer camps for 1940 occupancy, and approval has been granted for the construction of four others.

Several towns, where migrant workers gather in numbers, have provided camp grounds, sanitary toilets, running water, and shower bath facilities, while a larger number of towns have provided camp grounds or concentration lots for short migrant stop-overs.

The following illustrations reported by trained observers will show that improvements are needed at once to alleviate the deplorable conditions arising during peak harvest seasons over the State:

In and near a lower valley town in March 1938, some 2,500 migrants, single persons and families, drifted in before the harvest period. About 500 of them established themselves in a camp provided by the city, having running water and toilet facilities with space for about 3,000 people, while 5 miles down the road about 2,000 migrants camped in a colony scattered about in a mesquite thicket. Mothers with little babies were lying around on the ground under what shade the mesquite, with its thin foliage, provided, and there was no other shelter for those without tents and trailer houses. Sanitary conditions were deplorable. This situation was only alleviated when the State Health and State Labor Department came in. Some workers moved into the camp provided for them while many left for parts unknown.

"With the opening of the onion harvest in North Texas there is always an influx of outside labor, lured by "help wanted" broadcasts of growers and associations who would glut the labor market and lower wages.

"The 1938 season in this area was a too-glaring example of the sort of situations which arise from uncontrolled, misdirected movements of workers. There was not enough work for the thousands who trooped in; and the end of the season found them destitute and suffering from privation. There were groups living on waste vegetables left in the fields from late Spring harvests, striving to exist until they might better their condition with the work which could be expected at the opening of the cotton season."

Quoted here is a report on the conditions found at the end of the season:

"At _____ a half vacant lot has been used for camping purposes by the migratory workers. I interviewed Mr. J. T. of Grants, New Mexico, who has four boys and one girl large enough to work, and a son-in-law, R. H., appears to depend on his father-in-law to secure employment. He had recently lost a little two months old baby. The baby was born in New Mexico in a hospital and was brought down to Collin County, and while they did not say so, there can hardly be any question that the baby would have lived if it had not been subjected to the hardships of camp life and the insanitary conditions. Mr. T. told me that at one time there were over a thousand people camping on this small lot, where there were no sanitary facilities with the exception of one old corrugated iron surface toilet, which was adjacent to a gin yard. Few of the people who came to participate in the onion harvest made enough money to buy necessities. Mr. T's outfit has an old 12' x 12' tent, two mattresses and an old cook stove. Besides the four boys and one girl he has four other small children ranging in age from two to eight years. Asked if he was intending to go to South Texas to pick cotton in the early season, he said that he had no way of moving his group that far. He told me that a farmer in Collin County had promised him a house and he was anxious to get his family housed, and was hopeful that he and the boys could do odd jobs around and make enough money pending the cotton picking season which should open in early September. From Mr. T., I went to see Mrs. R. H. W., who was also camped on the lot mentioned above. Mrs. W. has three grown boys who work with her. She is a woman of about fifty years of age and shows plainly the marks of hardship. She told me that she and her three boys had made approximately \$35.00 since coming to _____ June 1 to the present day, June 27. They are in very hard circumstances and are not able to leave.

"These conditions were very ably reported in the Dallas News.

"As a sort of 'prologue' to the 1938 cotton season, a situation was brought to the attention of the Employment Service in March, 1938, which may be said to have "spot-lighted" the possibilities of the approaching season.

"In March of 1938, the County Judge of one of the principal cotton producing counties of the Amarillo District advised the Service that about three hundred Negro workers were stranded on a large cotton plantation in the adjoining county. The ranch in question was composed of 9,000 acres, the greater portion of which had been planted in cotton in 1937. The yield was considerably above average.

"The living quarters for these people are known as "dug-outs," about three feet in the ground, with weatherboard side and roof. There were three or four such places of abode, 80 feet long by 12 feet wide. Bunks were arranged in tiers and approximately 100 people were housed in each "dug-out." Cheap wood cook stoves were furnished and large groups used one stove. The ventilation was extremely poor, and there were no toilet facilities except surface toilets. At one time, it was said that there were over five hundred negroes in this camp. These people were piled up like hogs in these places throughout the winter; having no transportation facilities, they could not get away, and the pay received was spent for food. This particular grower made more cotton than he could pick; consequently, he had scattered cotton to pick into March of 1938.

"During the 1937 season, when cotton was good and a good picker could pull 500 pounds or more, 40 and 50 cents was the lowest paid. After Christmas, when cotton was thin and 200 pounds per day was the maximum, this grower reduced the price for pulling to 25 cents per hundred. During rainy weather, when the negroes could not work, he would advance them 20 cents per day in merchandise from his commissary. In February, it was said that there were 23 days of bad weather when no one could work and debt to the commissary was accrued. Their condition became unbearable. The sheriff learned of the situation and visited the camp. He found two dead negroes in one of the dug-outs, covered with old gunny sacks. They had died of pneumonia. The situation was discussed with the owner of the property and he told the officials that there was nothing to be alarmed about, that as soon as the weather warmed up the negroes would 'fade out.' It was when one of the negroes drifted into the county seat to inquire about getting 'relief' that the county judge became aware of the situation and contacted the Employment Service with the request to do something about it." 9/

9/ Texas Farm Placement Service. Annual Report, 1938.

Education

From the limited information available it is apparent that poverty and lack of education are characteristic of the majority of migrants in Texas. The following tables indicate the low educational status of farm laborers:

Table 4 .- Education of 325 agricultural laborers by race,
Karnes County, Texas, September 1936 1/

Race	Number	Percentage of laborers completing specified grades			
		None	1-2	3-4	Over 4
White	19	0	0	10	90
Negro	21	10	43	33	14
Mexican	285	35	36	24	5

1/ Survey of Agricultural Laborer Conditions, Karnes County, Texas. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Security Administration, and Bureau of Agricultural Economics cooperating - Tom Vasey, Farm Security Administration; Josiah C. Folsom, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C., 1937.

The above table indicates that more than one-third of the Mexican laborers had never attended school, compared to 10 percent of the Negro workers. Furthermore, only 5 percent of the Mexicans had gone beyond the fourth grade, compared to 14 percent of the Negroes, and 90 percent of the white laborers.

Table 5 .- Educational status of 620 agricultural laborers, selected
at random during the cotton harvest in a number of Texas
areas, 1938 1/

Race	Number	Percentage <u>2/</u> distribution completed			
		No grade	Third grade	Seventh grade	High school
White	42	19	81	36	5
Negro	165	8	81	22	6
Mexican	413	40	51	9	0

1/ Survey of Farm Laborers, Texas (unpublished), Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas A. & M. College, Farm Security Administration and Works Progress Administration, cooperating, 1938.

2/ Cumulative percent.

The educational attainment of this group of agricultural laborers is low, as indicated by the above table. Almost one-fifth of the white laborers had little or no schooling, compared to 8 percent of the Negroes, and two-fifths of the Mexicans. As a matter of fact, less than 10 percent of the Mexican laborers completed elementary school, while slightly more than one-third of the white laborers and less than one-fourth of the Negro laborers completed elementary school.

Earnings of Agricultural Laborers

Very little information is available on the earnings of agricultural laborers. However, casual observation and relief applications are indicative of the fact, that a high percentage of the workers do not have an economic income sufficient to provide a decent standard of living.

A summary of two studies presented here are indicative of the economic status of agricultural laborers in Texas.

1. A survey of agricultural laborers in Karnes County, Texas, 10/ in 1936 shows the average earnings of 325 workers to be \$171, of which approximately 95 percent was derived from agriculture.
2. A survey of 620 agricultural laborers 11/ in a number of Texas areas in 1938 shows the average earnings to be \$225, of which about 67 percent was derived from agriculture.

10/ Survey of Agricultural Labor Conditions in Karnes County, Texas, Tom Vasey and Josiah C. Folsom, Washington, D. C.

11/ Study of Farm Laborers, 1938. Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Farm Security Administration and Works Progress Administration. (Unpublished)

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